

## **I.T. Village Youth Lab Holds Graduation Ceremony**

*City, Dell, Inc., Uptown Consortium partnership graduates inaugural class*

Today as a part of the City of Cincinnati's commitment to economic and workforce development, fifteen students between the ages of 12 and 18 participated in a Graduation Ceremony from the second I.T. Village Youth Lab designed to teach them important computer skills. Supported by Dell, Inc. and Uptown Consortium, the two I.T. Village Youth Labs brought technology and expert IT business practitioners together with youth participants. The program helped the cohort of students to gain practical, interactive information technology skills necessary for academic and career success.

The six-week information technology program sought to develop students for the work environment the City is working to create. "As we continue to develop our neighborhoods and buildings, we must also develop our people, especially our youth," said City Manager Milton Dohoney, Jr. "A key path to growing the City of Cincinnati revolves around preparing tomorrow's workforce to take those newly created jobs with programs such as the I.T. Youth Village."

Mayor Mark Mallory provided a welcome address to the graduates and their family members in attendance. "I commend the graduates for taking advantage of this innovative opportunity to learn the technology skills necessary to compete," said Mayor Mark Mallory. "Information Technology is a growing employment area in Cincinnati. The IT Village will connect our young people to those future jobs."

As a partner in the program, Dell, Inc. provided each graduate a computer, a printer, a one-year Internet subscription to America Online (AOL), and other technology accessories at the graduation ceremony.

One of the primary goals of the program was to provide young people access to information technology so that they could learn marketable skills, find required information, and participate in the global online community safely. The course, which was taught by staff volunteering their time from the city/county Regional Computer Center, included:

Margo Springs, Interim Director of the Regional Computer Center challenged the students to "utilize their newly acquired technical and analytical skills for their future educational career paths and to look to their mentors as resources."

Na'kima Reid, a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student from the School for Creative & Performing Arts provided student reflections at the graduation ceremony saying, "Through the program I have gained so many useful technology tools that will help me on my schoolwork, typing papers, and doing research - all the things that will help me excel. Now, I can do research at home and even have an understanding of how to fix my own computer." Reid graduated from the first IT Village Youth Lab and plans to attend Florida State University.

The program was also made possible with the support of Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, the Urban League of Greater Cincinnati, and the Avondale Community Pride Center.

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